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### XXIII.—*MAGNIFICENCIA ECCLESIE.*

This curious product of mediævalism, translated from some Latin treatise by an unknown hand in the latter half of the fifteenth century, carries symbolism to its last stage. It is interesting as showing how the preachers in the abbeys and cathedrals of England found, on occasion, "sermons in stones." It would seem as if Longfellow must have read this poem; for a part of his *Golden Legend*, the close of Friar Cuthbert's sermon, is an accurate reproduction of the spirit of this piece.

"And above it the great cross-beam of wood  
Representeth the Holy Rood  
Upon which, like the bell, our hopes are hung;  
And the wheel, wherewith it is swayed and rung,  
Is the mind of man, that round and round  
Sways, and maketh the tongue to sound!  
And the rope, with its twisted cordage three,  
Denoteth the Scriptural Trinity  
Of Morals, and Symbols, and History,  
And the upward and downward motion show  
That we touch upon matters high and low,  
And the constant change and transmutation  
Of action and of contemplation,  
Downward, the Scripture brought from on high;  
Upward, exalted again to the sky.  
Downward, the literal interpretation,  
Upward, the Vision and Mystery!"

The Trinity College ms. R. 3. 21, from which the poem is taken, is fully described in the second volume of Prevost James's *Catalogue of the Western mss. in Trinity College*. It dates from the reign of Edward IV. Among its earliest owners was Roger Thorney, a mercer of London and friend of Wynkyn de Worde. It may be surmised that the poem was written not far from the vicinity of

the Westminster printing shop. John Stow, who owned the ms. in 1598, ascribed the poem to Lydgate in his last of the Monk's writings, printed on the last leaf of Stow's *Chaucer*. He was followed in this error by Joseph Ritson, in his *Bibliographia Literaria* (1802). There is no evidence whatever for this theory, and the poem is far too uncouth and irregular ever to have been penned by Lydgate.<sup>1</sup>

The poem, miserably deficient in a literary sense, is yet of value in letting us look for a moment at a fifteenth-century church through a fifteenth-century lens.

Trinity ms. R. 3. 21.

f. 285 a *Hic sequitur parvus tractatus compendiose in Anglicis translatus de magnificencia ecclesie.*

*Audi Israel. Deus tuus vnus est. Ipsum adorabis & illi soli seruies. Non assumes nomen dei tui in uanum Sicut primum preceptum est quod pertinet ad patrem. Ita ista ad filium. Obserua diem sabbati id est expecta requiem per bonitatem dei. id est per spiritum sanctum.*

Emperour of all emperours omnipotent  
 Preserue pys empyre in all prosperite  
*Rex Regum* oure Reame & our regent  
 Rule & redresse in ryght & equitye  
 O crystyn soule here what ys seyde to the  
 Haue oon god in worship of whom pou toke creacion  
 ffader & son & holy gost pat blessyd trinite  
 And hym oonly serue with dew gratulacion

Hys name in nowyse pou shalt take in veyne  
 pat ys pou shalt nat swere but hit be in ryght  
 lyche as þe furst precept beforne specfyed pleyne

<sup>1</sup> See *The Lydgate Canon*, p. xxxvi (Philological Soc. *Transactions*, March, 1908), for rhyme-tests.

perteyneþ to þe fader ryght so þys Iplyght  
 perteyneþ to þe son of idemptical myght  
 The 11<sup>de</sup> in trinite god & man verryly  
 Who þat beleueþ þe son of god ys only man & nat god bryght  
 He worshippeþ hym nat / but takeþ hys name veynly

Thow shalt halow þe sabat þat ys þe holy day  
 Whyche longeþ to þe 11<sup>de</sup> person þe same god in substance  
 ffrom seruile werk þou shalt absteyne þe I say  
 And in goodnes of þe holygost dresse þy remembraunce  
 These oper vij . preceptes with all þeyre circumstaunce  
 Were long to declare þefore with your pacience  
 Because we take in þe chirche feyþe & creaunce  
 We purpose to speke of hyr magnificence

Souereynes þe grounde of our processe ys thys  
 To shew yow why þe chyrche ys magnyfyed  
 And of sondry þynges in hit what þe menyng ys  
 As porche chyrche & chauncell as shalbe dyscryuyd  
 Iles toures pylers walles & wyndowes wyde  
 With oper particuler þynges all we wyll expresse  
 What yche of hem signifiþ yef ye wyll abyde  
 We purpose to preue in compendious processe

Thys erþely chyrche in whyche þe pepyll dayly  
 ys congregate oonly to worshyp of spyrites heuynly  
<sup>1</sup> Construct of quyk stones apostles & martyrs gloryos  
*Hic est domus DOMINI frequenter edificata þan þus*  
 Thys chyrche here ys clepyd *Ecclesia militans*  
 ffor hyt ys cuer werryng ayenst þe vycious  
<sup>1</sup> The chyrche aboue ys clepyd *Ecclesia triumphans*  
 Betokeneþ þe celestiall chyrche of spirites heuynly

<sup>1</sup> Opposite these lines the scribe writes "a." Reconstruct the lines as follows 1 2 3 4 5 6 7. Line 2 should end in some word like "vertuous." The scribe erred through confusion of the "of spirites," occurring in two separate lines.

Lyche as out of þe ryght syde of Adam  
 Oure moder Eve was make & he slepyng  
 Ryght so þe churche of whyche we take crystyndam  
 Out of crystes ryght syde toke forme in hys dying  
 Whereout ran flowyng . ij . lycours dystyllyng  
 Precyous blood & watyr for oure redempcion  
 Whyche sygnify . ij . sacramentes our most helfull wasshyng  
 Baptym & Eukaryst necessary to our saluacion

Than syrs to meue yow þe churche to magnify  
 ffurst ye shall consydere in your mynde expresse  
 Worship & reuerence to þe fadyr almyghty  
 longeþ of ryght with verrey dew mekenesse  
 Whyche in þe chyrche of hys gret bounteuosnesse  
 Abydeþ oure commyng & ys dayly there present  
 Then commyng to churche deuoutly do your besynesse  
 Mow ye best fulfyl þe furst commaundment

fol. 285 b And eke þe second for hit ys most conuenient  
 In chyrche where god & man ys verryly in substaunce  
 To restrayne your langage & be sad & silent  
 No iapyng ne ianglyng to cause perturbaunce  
 ffor hit ys þe celle of soulys gostly sustynaunce  
 Oure hauyn of refute oure helfull port salew  
 There ys hys glorios name red of most magnificence  
 Where we be hurt for soules socour euer peder we sew

Kepyng of þe holyday þys ys euyn trew  
 Perteyneþ to þe holygost þe þryd in dyuine  
 To be kept in þe chyrche hit ys most dew  
 ffrom worldly þoughtes in þat place men shuld declyne  
 There suld be put prayere & holy þoughtes fyne  
 Thys place ys halowyd by our lordes holy presence

Then ought we to worship hit pleynty I termyne  
The . viij . sacramentes byn þere mynystred tour expedience

The churche fygureþ þe deificate *cella vniaria*  
As seyþ Salomon & poule *Ad Galathas quarto*  
*Illa que sursum est Ierusalem libera que est mater nostra*  
The heuynly churche ys triumphant & for þis reson to  
The membres of þat churche haue endyd þere woo  
In passions martyrdom & now be in glory  
The chyrche here ys werryng agayn our mortall foo  
þefore hit ys mylytant in þys lyfe transitory

Of þys churche Jerom Bede & oþer sey thus  
*Vrbs BEATA Ierusalem dicta pacis visio*  
*Que construitur in celis uiuis ex lapidibus*  
*Noua veniens de celo nuptiali thalamo*  
The mysteryes of þys chyrche ye shall vnderstand loo  
Be infinite as vnto our negligence  
But now to þe artificiall churche we wyll goo  
Of shap & membres shewyng þe experyence

Euery churche lo generally ys made þus  
The quere lowere þen þe body for þys encheson  
*Tanto maior est humilia te in omnibus*  
ffor so þe spirituall men shuld do by reson  
The hygher in dignite þe lower in spyryt eche seson  
Geuyng ensample to þe degrees temporall  
I suppose þys vndyrstondyng to many man is gason  
*Maior est obediencia QUAM victima*

The churche walles in . iij . quarters set in tryst  
The conuersion of Jewes & paynims signify  
ffrom . iij . quarters of þe world commyng to cryst  
Whyche wallys of square stones byn reryd hygh

Broken & polysshyd þe werke to rectyfy  
 That ys to mene stones þat to þese wallys perteyne  
 Must be made able by þe handes verrily  
 Of þe master werkman þat ys þe preste certeyne

These stonys togedyre conioynyd in þe werke  
 Som bere nat / but are bore *vt simplices loose*  
 Som bere & are borne *vt medii* seyþ þe clerke  
 Som bere & are nat borne / but of cryst *QUI est singulare*  
 These stones with mortar to gedyr syment be  
 Ryght so þe pepyl of þe church by heuynly disposicion  
 Shuld be conglutinat with loue & charyte  
 Then be þey quyk stones mete to þys operacion

The stones þat bere nat be þo of þe batylmentes  
 With suche oper garnysshers þat ly on loft hyghest  
 So þe simple pore in clene lyfe verrament  
 They yeue to þe church gret beute at leste  
 Though þey nat bere þey be necessary & honeste  
 The pore þough þey bere but lytyll cost & charge  
 Yet be þy quyk stones in þe church I sey preste  
 And with þeyre good prayeres þe feyþe gretly enlarge

f. 286 a Som bere & are bore as þus to wylþ ye here  
*Vt medii* þat ys to sey in myddes of þe werke  
 Whyche be lykenyd to pepyl of gret powere  
*ffor virtus in medio consistit* yef þis text be derke  
 lo in þe mene ys vertu / mys take nat your merke  
 The furst mow pray þe . ij .<sup>de</sup> mow pray & do  
 þe church ys nat bore vp all with cost quoth þe clerke  
 But with good werkes & deuout prayers also

Som bere & are nat bore but of cryste oonly  
 And whyche be þo þe lowest in þe foundation  
 By whyche þe prelates of þe church I may signify

ffor þey be þe worþyest of þe edificacion  
 They bere vp þe churche by ghostly operacion  
 Not we theym / but þey vs with holsom doctryne  
 Suppose vs & lyft vs out of tribulacion  
 And polysshe vs with penance þen be we stones fyne

The toures betoken prechors & prelacy  
 Whyche in þe churches defence be ready to refreyn  
 All tempestes whyche toures byn bylt hy  
*Vnde sponsus ad sponsam in canticis amoris* doþ seyn  
*Collum tuum sicut turris* also dauid seyþ pleyn  
*Edificata cum propugnacula* lo a pronosticacion  
 The toures of þe chyrche be prelates without feyn  
 Toures of oure defence ageyn gostly tribulacion

Vppon þe mastyr toure þat ys seyð þe stepyll  
 Comonly þer stondeþ a shaft of altitude  
 Or a pynacle whyche to þe vndirstondyng of þe pepyll  
 Betokeneþ þe lyuyng of þe prelates to conclude  
 Whos mynde vpward to the heuenes celsytude  
 Shuld be dyrect & þere also aboue  
 A pomell or a crosse with sowde or syment glued  
 þeron a wedyrcok with yche wynde doþ moue

The cok betokeneþ þe prechor of goddes worde  
 ffor ayenst þe . iij . wyndes he torneþ hys hede  
 By whyche wyndes ye shaþ vnderstonde discorde  
 Of . iij . malycyos pepil as heriticius in feyþ dede  
 Proud man & couetous & þo þat lecherous lyfe lede  
 Whyche . iij . be seyde detestable ouer all þe synnes seyn  
 Ayenst whyche . goddes prechors with opyn mouþe doþ grede  
 lyke as þe wedurcok ayenst yche wynde doþe <sup>m</sup> <sub>w</sub> euyn

The crosse of Iron stondeþ opon a pomell rounde  
 In tokenyng þat cryst Jhesus made oure redempcion  
 Vppon þe crosse oure gostly enemy to confounde



Amyddes þe worlde as scripture makes mension  
 Thys þyng to proclayme þorought euery region  
 longeþ to þe curat to stere oure slepy mynde  
 ffor to remembre oure blessyd lordes passion  
 Whyche apon a crosse wold dy for all mankynde

Whyche prechor ys lykened to a cok take hede  
 A Cok soþly dyuydyþ þe owres of þe nyght  
 And out of slombryng & slepe he clepeþ vs in dede  
 And hys crowyng bryngeþ tydynges of day lyght  
 And for to make also hys voyce of gretter myght  
 With his owne wynges he beteþ hymself full ryfe  
 The mystery of þys whoso vndyrstond hit ryght  
 Betokeneþ lyfe actyf & lyfe contemplatyfe.

The nyght betokeneþ þis blynd worldes wrechydnes  
 In whyche þe pepyl dayly lyþe slepyng in syn  
 The cok I mene þe preste clepeþ vs with besynes  
 To ryse out of oure derk slepe & conseleþ vs to wyn  
 The lyght euerlastyng kepe þus þy mynde withyn  
*Ve dormientibus* þe scripture seyþh pleyuly  
 Wo be to þe slepar þat vertu cannat begyn  
*Exurge qui dormis* all creatures þou shuld cry

fol. 286 b Ryght as a foule spredeþ vppon her nest syttyng  
 Whyche vnder her wynges her byrdes doþ cure  
 Ryght so oure modyr holy churche presenteþ a figure  
 Norysshying her chyldre vnder þe couerture  
 Of her wynges þat ys to sey þe ylys I sure  
 ffor vnder þe modyr's wynges þe chylde is kept clos  
 ffrom perysshying & perelk þan pray we with scrypture  
*Sub umbra alarum tuarum protege nos.*

The wyndowes be glased for defence of wynde & Rayn  
 In whyche þer be portrayed storyes auctorized

That betokeneþ þe deuyne scripture as doctors seyn  
 Whyche ys gret defence where hit ys exercysyd  
 Ayenst erroneous wyndes *with* heresyys supprysyd  
 Also as þe bryght son yeueþ orient lyght  
 Thorough þe glasse to þe chyrche ryght so hit ys deuysyd  
 That þe storyes of scripture make þe consciens bryght

The wyndows by wydere *withyn* þan *without*  
 In tokyn þat þe mysterious science of scripture  
 Passeþ þe litterall sense & ryght so out of dout  
 The prelates of churche in vndyrstandyng pure  
 Passe þe lay pepyll & as clowdes I yow sure  
 Ben seen fleyng *quasi columbe ad fenestras*  
 These wyndows betokyn . v . wyttes in eche creature  
 Openyng inward þe redyer to reccue grace

They be variaunt *without ne vanitates hauriant*  
 That ys þat no vyce entere nor no corrupcion  
 Then to receue grace þey ought nat to be scant  
 But opyn inwarde redy to take gostly instruccion  
*Hostium christus est* þan *with* swetnes & deuocion  
 Entryng þe churche þynke þe dore seyþ þe gospell  
 Ye cryst hymself þys ys hys own mocion  
 I am þe dore by whyche ye enter þe churche perpetuell

The pylers of þe chyrche byn þe doctours verly  
 Whyche myghtyly bere hit vp *with* holy doctryne  
 Augustyne & Ambrose holy Jerom & Gregory  
 As þe foure euangelystes bere vp þe trone dyuyne  
 Ryght so þey se þe chyrche & be as syluer fyne  
*Vt in Canticis canticorum* ye may haue euydence  
*Columpnas fecit argenteas* þat as syluer shyne  
 ffor in þo songes of þe soule ys songyn gret reuerence

*Veni columba mea* vnto my tabernacle  
*Columpna argenteas* þere shynyng shalt þou se  
*Aureum reclinatorium* be in myn habitacle  
*Curyosly* contryuyd embrawd yd *with* charyte  
*Assensum purpureum* for pure humylyte  
ffor þe ys redy rayed in my regalibus  
lo for mannys soule ys ordeynyd þys dignite  
Now whyche be þe reclinatoryes we shall sone discus

The seetys in þe churche where men rest in to pray  
Tho be þe reclinatoryes whyche setys signyfy  
The holy *contemplacion* of men & wemen I say  
Whyche in holy þoughtes in her seetes byn besy  
In whyche pepyl our lord haþ hys sete verryly  
And resteth in þeyre soules *with full gret plesaunce*  
Those be þe goldyn seetes occupyed *with* þynges heuynly  
lo of þe reclinatoryes þys ys þe signifaunce

The degrees ascendyng vnto þe autere  
Betokeneth apostles & martyrs . I . vndyrtake  
Whyche forto shede þer blood made no dangere  
But paciently suffred to dy for crystes sake  
þys ys *ascensum purpureum* þat Salomon let make  
Of Cedre trees of lyban a Royall mansion  
And cryste makeþ hys house of þe purest to ransake  
Of holy seyntes puryd by peynfull passion

fol. 287 a The auter in hit sylf betokeneth cryst Jhesus  
Vppon whyche dayly þe preste makeþ oblacion  
To þe fadyr in heuen þerfore þe prest seyþ þus  
*PER christum dominum nostrum* at þe ende of his orison  
The multitude of mysteryes short in conclusion  
That may be ascryuyd to þe chyrches excellence  
Were impossible for oon clerke in myn opinion  
In all hys lyfe to shew to your intelligence

Wherefore brefely concludyng oure purpos  
 Why we mene þys mater I wyll hit expresse  
 lo þat eche man shuld þynke hymself on of pose  
 To do þe churche reuerence with all mekenesse  
 þys ys nat all ment by þe stonewerk in soþnesse  
 But by þe crystyn pepyl in baptym confirmat  
 ffor ryche & pore when deþe hem shall dystresse  
 But he be a quyk stone he ys a Renegat

That ys a forsakere of feyþe & of trew beleue  
 Of whyche þer be to many yef men shuld hit say  
 Yef feyþe were in vs stedfast noþyng shuld myscheue  
 Sysme ne fygaldry ne falshode in no way  
 Shuld reygne among þe pepyl þus day by day  
 To abhominable yef men wold take hede  
*Eiciens de templo* cryst our lord drof no nay  
 Thre pepyl þat gretly defoule þe churche in dede

Tho were proud men lecherous & couetous  
 Whyche in þe heuynly chyrche haue no dwellyng place  
 That ought we curates to loke well about vs  
 These . iij . cursyd wedys out of þe chyrche to race  
 þe prophet Daud *PsALMO LXXX<sup>mo</sup> . vj<sup>o</sup> . has*  
*Ciuitas dei gloriosa dicta sunt de te*  
 Thys Ciuitas *interpretatur* ciuium vnitas  
 þe churche membres shuld be oon in feyþe & charyte

Pryde doutlese of þe churche membre ys non  
 Remembre why lucifere fel from heuyn down  
 þan who þat ys mysponde may be no quyk ston  
 He must be þrow downe þan þys ys þe conclusion  
 What pride now regneþ & inordinat abusion  
 To abhominable to here yef ye wold vndyrstond  
 And moste among þe pore þat haue no possession  
 Syþ hit began was neuer wele comen in þys lond

The . iij<sup>de</sup> ys lechery whyche cryst draue out also  
 An vnclene pale stone in paldnes abydyng  
 Of whyche stones whylom were founded chyrches two  
*Soddoma Gomor* þat to hell were slydyng  
 ffor febyll foundation hit gayneþ nat þe gydyng  
*Debile fundamentum fallit opus* as I rede  
 These stones from þe werke we must by dyuydyng  
 Or þey wolð drow down all þys ys forto drede

The couetous also auoydyd must be nede  
 In whyche be . viij . propertees full perylous I preue  
 As þeft Rauen vsury lying & falshede  
 Sacrylege & simony þat doþ þe toures meue  
 And where þe mures be meuyng þe werk must myscheue  
 The brennyng of þis ston dyssolueþ þe syment  
 That ys loue & charyte þen trustly me beleue  
 Suche stones in þe churche be full inconuenient

Broþer þe gouernaunce of þe churche I assygne yow forþy  
 That ye suffer þerin no surfet nor superfluyte  
 Therwhyles I wyll go in to þe library  
 To serche & stody in bokes of auctoryte  
 Eftsones to shew þe pepyl þe gret dignite  
 That longeþ to þe churche & liberaþ fraunchyse  
 Whyles ye pray I wolð rede storyes of antiquite  
 And I wyll pray whyle ye rede eftsone in lyke wyse

*Explicit.*

HENRY NOBLE MACCRACKEN.